

Community

Picket Sees Moral Issue, Takes Risks

There was the risk of unpopularity, misunderstanding, defamation, and just plain miscalculation

This is the true story of a priest's experiences over a 48-hour period in combatting segregation. Only names and places have been changed.

I MET Father John Smith one summer in Middletown, U.S.A. We stayed at the same parish. I was attending a summer session at a local university; he was visiting friends. One afternoon near the end of our stay—Saturday, August 20, 1959, to be exact—Father Smith told me about his ac-

tivities the previous evening.

A few years back he had been active in Middletown's CORE—Committee of Racial Equality. The ends of the Committee are desegregation, meaning that it works for equal rights for all people at places that are public or serve public interests, such as restaurants, hotels, and theatres.

At the time of Father's conversation with me, CORE was trying to relieve the color bar at a well-known restaurant. Several weeks previously the place

had been tested by a colored city official and two white associates. They had entered the restaurant and asked for service, which had been refused. The outcome of the affair was that the Negro official was arrested. Following this CORE made attempts to negotiate with the proprietor. These negotiations were unfruitful. Then, using the technique proper to its aims, CORE restored to peaceful demonstrations.

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COMING NEXT MONTH

Interracial Marriage and "Passing"—by Russ Marshall

Can't Feel at Home in South Africa

Visitor finds apartheid — intense segregation — there covers "like a pall" and makes "Mississippi look liberal by comparison"

(SECOND OF 3-PART SERIES)

MY FIRST IMPRESSIONS of the Union of South Africa were pleasant enough. We arrived, by plane from Brazzaville, at the beautiful city of Johannesburg. Its brick bungalow neighborhoods, well planned streets, and smart looking shop windows resemble American cities more than any other place I have seen in Europe or Africa.

But, once I had looked beneath the surface, I knew that I could never feel at home here. Apartheid hangs over this city like a pall. The apartheid program in the Union is one of intensified segregation that makes Mississippi look liberal by comparison.

Three Divisions

The present government, now headed by Prime Minister Hendrik F. Verwoerd, upon coming to power, decided to enforce existing segregation laws, many of which had hitherto been ignored, and to create new ones.

All the people of the Union are divided into three distinct racial categories:

1. European, which means white.
2. Native African, which means Negro.

3. Colored or part-Negroes, many of whom are descended from unions of African natives and the Boers, who were ancestors of the "Europeans."

The first problem that the government created for itself was to decide who belonged in the various racial categories. Some of the situations that arose would have been comic if the human suffering involved were not so tragic.

And "Doubtful"

People of "doubtful origin," natives living and accepted as colored, and colored accepted as white, had to appear before a board to be classified. There are cases on record in which a husband was placed in one category, his wife in another, and the children divided. During the classification the people became so color conscious that reclassification in some instances led to suicide.

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The sting of the apartheid laws is felt chiefly in the areas of housing and employment opportunities and in the loss of social status and human dignity.

All large cities in the Union now have native reserves or townships built by the government where all Africans must live. At Johannesburg, as in all the other cities, the reserves are located 18 to 20 miles out beyond the city limits.

Concentration Camp

We visited one of the reserves which somehow reminded me of a concentration camp. It was made up of small, identical houses, row upon row, each one about three-fourths the size of a garage. The houses are divided into four small rooms where families of two or 10 persons must live.

Each family has a small plot of land for private gardening. Seeking some individuality, many families have added rooms or interesting flower arrangements in gardens, anything to break the bleak monotony of the place.

While at the reserve, we visited in the home of a man who does home improvement work in the African community. He is not permitted to do business, of course, in the white or colored communities.

Forced to Move

All the natives who formerly lived in Johannesburg were forced by the government to move out to the reserves. It is true that, prior to this mass relocation, they lived in appalling slums inside the city. They needed better housing.

But, in this government action, the natives were given no choice about their own living arrangements. They were moved out wholesale. And those few who had owned land lost the right even of holding title to land.

The reserves appeared to me to be actually separated by buffer zones of several city blocks width. The land in these zones is fallow, and weeds are kept down.

I was only a corporal in the Army

so I cannot say with authority that these locations were planned with military maneuvers in mind. However, I suspected that a minority of one million whites could not cold bloodedly and methodically deprive 10 million Africans of fundamental rights and fail to take certain precautions.

And, in this case, even a corporal would have no difficulty planning the strategy of closing with the "enemy" and destroying him.

The government has taken further precautions by dividing the reserves according to tribe, one for Zulus, one for Basutos, and so forth. Intertribal rivalry, which has existed for centuries, can thus be kept alive to forestall a united uprising.

Hold Majority

This division also creates the impression that the tribes are distinct nationalities, making it possible for the Europeans to say: "We are a majority here."

The Africans are as sharply restricted in the area of employment opportunities as they are in residence loca-

tion. They are not allowed to learn trades and are further limited by the system of job reservation.

Job reservation is a classification of all occupations according to race, reserving some for Europeans, some for colored and some for natives.

In general, skilled jobs are reserved for whites, semi-skilled for colored, and unskilled for natives. Two of the largest native classifications are gold and diamond mine labor and domestic service.

Reclassify Jobs

When there is the slightest recession, occupations are reclassified from colored to white and from native to colored. While I was in Johannesburg, elevator operator jobs were changed from colored to white.

Natives and colored have no bargaining rights of their own as all labor negotiations are carried on by the white unions, and their contracts also set wage rates for the other two groups.

One result of the apartheid laws,

(Continued on page 3)



"We visited one of the reserves which somehow reminded me of a concentration camp. . . . It is true that, prior to this mass relocation, they lived in appalling slums. But in this government action the natives were given no choice. And those few who had owned land lost the right even of holding title to land."

Readers Write

Says Editorial on Congo Shows "Ignorance, if not Prejudice"

EDITOR: The editorial on Congo by E.J.B. in the August issue shows inexcusable ignorance of facts if not prejudice.

In particular it seems to ignore and negate the work of the missionaries who have in the relatively short period of 60-70 years performed a heroic and magnificent work of Christianization, civilization, and education (including schools of elementary grades, high schools, training schools, and even the beginning of a University), all this largely with the support of the homeland and the administration. Can you imagine all the native priests and bishops, the present administration as sixth graders?

An article such as this from the editor discredits the whole magazine; it cannot further be depended upon as a medium of true information and education and therefore loses its value.

Please cancel my subscription.

REV. WILFRED M. DEFEVERE,
C.I.C.M.
Dallas, Texas

Editor's Note: The editorial referred to Congo's lack of lay people trained for temporal leadership rather than to the clergy. The lack of trained leadership among the Congolese can be documented in both pro- and anti-Belgian sources from many countries.

For example, L. Moyersoen, Vice President of the Belgian Chamber of Deputies, writing in the July, 1960 issue of "Social Action," published by the Indian Institute of Social Order, praises the Belgian government and the Catholic Church for their medical and educational preparation of Con-

goles for independence but adds: "Unfortunately, the training of the elite has too long been neglected. Higher education is something recent, and among the political leaders no one possesses a university degree."

Father John Considine, M.M., writing in "Catholic World," November, 1959, states: "It is a fact that 400 Congolese Catholic priests had already been trained and were in service in the Congo before the first Congolese layman was graduated in July, 1958, from the first authorized school of higher learning in the Congo, the Catholic University of Lovanium."

The editorial erred in its statement that Belgium's "colonial administration refused to grant higher education, above the sixth grade, to the natives." It should have modified the statement by noting that that refusal had been withdrawn recently—quite recently as Father Considine's and M. Moyersoen's comments indicate. Calling this error "inexcusable ignorance of facts, if not prejudice" is surely too sweeping an indictment of the editorial, and of COMMUNITY.

(Continued from page 2)

that seemed to me to be even more serious than housing and employment segregation, is loss of personal dignity. All Negro Africans must, for example, carry pass books at all times as a means of identification and as proof that their taxes have been paid.

The pass books serve to restrict the African's freedom of movement as it indicates "where he belongs." He must get permission from the national police to go from one city to another. Such permission is almost impossible to get. It is likewise almost impossible for him to leave the country.

If an African is found without his pass, he is arrested. A story is told in South Africa of a man who was awakened by a disturbance and went out to his yard wearing his pajamas and robe to investigate. The police arrived, found him without his pass, and arrested him.

With Savage Efficiency

The indignities dramatized by this story were one of the causes of the riots in the Union this year, when Africans publicly burned great quantities of the hated pass books.

Such uprisings are put down by the national police with savage efficiency. The Africans are given little education. They are largely unorganized and have little means with which to fight back.

White South Africans really think that apartheid, the complete separation of the races, will work. One indication that it does not really work is the pressure in some areas for repeal of the National Immoralities Act, as it is called, which prohibits miscegenation.

Embarass Leaders

It seems that some embarrassing arrests and convictions have occurred among government leaders and other prominent whites for violation of this act. And one rather mediaeval penalty for this crime is flogging.

During times of great oppression native leaders have escaped to Basutoland, a British protectorate, entirely within the geographical borders of the Union of South Africa. There is little employment in Basutoland and many Basutos go to live and work in the Union where they form a large part of the mining labor force.

At the Roma

We were out of the Union for a while as we traveled through Basutoland, stopping at the Pius XII University—or the Roma, as it is usually called. It is operated by priests of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, and its faculty is made up of professors from the United States, Europe, and Africa.

We stayed in the faculty village which is composed of rather spacious stone ranch style houses and is also multi-racial.

When we left Basutoland, we crossed once again into South Africa and went on to Durban. We found conditions there much like Johannesburg. Durban also has a large Indian community, which has been engaged in trade there for generations. The government is trying to "relocate" the Indians out of the business areas.

We visited Cato Manor, the African reserve, where riots took place a few years ago. The day we were there there was some kind of disturbance and the national police were on hand, equipped with small tanks, to put down the trouble.

This evidence of force and suppressed hatred was symbolic I thought, of the tragic country I was now leaving.

—Tom Wenig

Tom Wenig will conclude this series on Africa in next month's issue of COMMUNITY.

PICTURE CREDITS: Matthew Garnett, page 1; Mexican Government Tourist Bureau, bottom of page 3; U.S. Department of Labor, page 4.

Only One Day of Vacation Disappointing, That in "Our Own, Our Native Land"

ONE OUT OF 14. A person should figure that in a two week "dream" vacation, one day would be disappointing. One day was.

My parents, a fellow priest, and I spent 13 wonderful days touring Old



Father Malette, fellow-tourist Father George Clements, and two Mexican boys.

Mexico. Through Saltillo, Guadalajara, San Luis Potosi, Mexico City, Guadalupe, Valles, Monterey, and other cities, we enjoyed the warmth of Mexican hospitality. My confrere and I celebrated Mass in great Cathedrals, in small villages.

Everywhere the air is permeated with the Faith of this nation, our nearest Southern neighbor. And mingled with this deep and ancient Faith is a bursting growth, and hope that fills the land. The papers evince some current anti-United States political feeling, but nowhere did we encounter anything but the warmest friendliness, camaraderie, affection and respect.

We swam and feasted and rested and enjoyed Mexico every moment of our stay.

Everything Changes

The last 12 hours were the horrible hours of the trip. We reached the Mexican border town of Nuevo Laredo, and had our last wonderful Mexican meal together at the Cadillac restaurant. Then down we went, across the bridge spanning the misnomered Rio Grande, through the rigorous United States and Texas Customs, and back into our own, our native land. And everything changes. No matter how you might expect the change, it is stupefying.

My folks were to drive back. My fellow priest and I had hoped to fly from Mexico. However the only connection we could make was an early morning plane from San Antonio. And so we had to spend the night in Texas.

LONDON, England—In a brief visit to England Archbishop Denis Hurley, O.M.I., of Durban, told a press conference that the racial crisis in South Africa is a result of the failure of Christians to practice what they preach.

"Ultimately, I suppose, the South African situation is a terrible expression of the failure—as a churchman I would say the great failure—of Christians to apply their basic rules of behavior to the community in which they live," said the South African prelate.

"The tragedy of South Africa is that, politically speaking, it is the perfect example of the irresistible force and the immovable object. The irresistible force is African nationalism, the immovable object white supremacy."

I am white. He is Negro. And so now when we were all back in our native land, we wanted a malt, or cup of coffee, I had to go in and bring it to the car.

When we hit San Antonio, we searched for lodgings among a dozen or so motels, and had to give it up as a lost cause. Late at night, we finally were hospitably quartered in an outlying seminary.

After Mass at daybreak, we reached the airport. There we had to tolerate the surliness and stupid insolence of the airlines clerk, who made us pay an unexplained \$7.00. When I stated the line's own agent in Mexico City made the original arrangement, the fellow, keeping one eye on my companion, said, "Just consider the source."

Sickness in Our Land

It has happened a thousand times before. It has happened scores of times with me as a witness. I remember the golf course near Chicago where six of us priests were given our money back and told that the course had just closed when they noticed one of us was Negro. I remember the resort lake we weren't permitted to use because the other people (mostly Chicago Catholics) would object to this priest's swimming there.

No matter how often it happens, overtly or subtly, each time the stupidity, injustice, and insult is appalling. This time above all, I felt sorry for my country, for the South, for Chicago, for there is a frightening, horrible sickness in our land. I felt ashamed of our stupidity in considering Mexico a somewhat backward land that should be taught by us, when that nation is immeasurably ahead of us in basic Christianity and humanity.

With renewed enthusiasm, my heart and mind go out to all the "tender warriors" who brave insult and injury to sit in integrated classrooms; to the "sit-in" students at lunch counters; to the Catholics who brave the storm of hostility to attend Mass in their own parishes and whose children are told that "their" school is five miles distant when there is a Catholic school two blocks away (in Illinois, not Louisiana); to the Negro teens who "wade in" at Rainbow Beach.

Besides giving, we should be receiving assistance from so-called "backward" nations in ridding our land of the anti-Christian sickness of race hatred.

—Father Daniel Mallette

Father Mallette of Chicago appears for the first time in COMMUNITY.



BELOW: One highlight of the trip was the Basilica of Guadalupe.

RIGHT: Statue inside Basilica depicts Juan Diego unfolding his "tilma" (cloak) before Bishop Zumarraga, with its miraculous picture of Our Lady as she appeared to the poor Indian. The tilma, enshrined in the Basilica, retains its colors perfectly 400 years after the event.



Over-all

In Illinois last summer a two-year-old boy, son of Texans of Mexican ancestry, died from eating poison, which had been carelessly stored by a farmer next to the converted chicken coop he had provided as living quarters for this migrant family.

In Maryland this year an open truck carrying a group of migrants, perched atop five tons of corn, plunged over an embankment. Two were killed, eight others seriously injured.

In Washington, D.C., Texas farmers protested the 50-cents-an-hour minimum wage (for Mexican nationals) established by the Secretary of Labor. They also challenged his right to set any minimum for foreign workers.

IN THE PAST 40 years the United States has advanced in a sense of social responsibility, as reflected in its laws.

Workers injured in industrial accidents are now covered by workmen's compensation. The unemployed have a right to unemployment compensation. Minimum wage laws now cover many of the workers employed in American cities. The right of industrial workers to organize and to bargain collectively is recognized and upheld by the courts.

But as these advances were being made to the benefit of the industrial worker, the same basic provisions were being denied the American agricultural worker.

Some agricultural workers suffered still more handicaps. In order to secure even the 120-odd days of work which is the annual average for the United States farm worker and the approximately \$800.00 average annual income, some have had to become migrants, travelling from state to state, often in unsafe, overcrowded vehicles, to find work.

Seldom can such a worker meet the residence requirements for public welfare, should he become destitute. At election time he is not eligible to cast his vote—another result of impermanency of residence. He faces innumerable problems in the education of his children and often must live in sub-standard, unsanitary housing.

Racial Tension at Chicago Beach

A FEW WEEKS AGO, while taking a walk through the Rainbow Beach area of Chicago's lakefront, I was confronted by the sight of a rather large group of policemen, talking together. Soon after I spotted them, I heard a comment from a group of people spending their Sunday afternoon on a picnic at this beach. One of the group said, "I'm not prejudiced at all, but this is going too far."

Judging from these two circumstances, I gathered something unusual was going on, to say the least.

I headed for the lake front, where there were more policemen and a few police-cars (paddy-wagons). By questioning two young girls, I discovered that there were some Negroes on the beach; this was what was causing all the commotion. As I proceeded farther, large crowds were gathered within the radius of one block. I walked among them, listening to their words, which were far from friendly.

Do Something

While walking across the sand, I heard a teenage girl say to some young boys, just returned to their blanket, "I thought you were going to do something." His response was something to the effect that it would be impossible to start violence because there were so many policemen around.

After this, I joined the Negro group, which turned out to be a delegation from NAACP (National Association for

Only in the past decade have a few states begun to rectify this inequality. Twenty-seven have established migrant labor committees to study the matter, and a few states now have some laws covering migrants (see Table).

Another Scandal

The domestic agricultural migrant also finds himself confronted with competition from foreign labor, imported to perform the work which he would like to perform.

The plight of these strangers constitutes another scandal in American agriculture. The foreign laborer who is brought to the United States for employment on a farm is not permitted to do other than agricultural work or to freely choose his employer. His contract holds him to the farmer to whom he may be assigned for as long as that farmer wants to keep him.

At the termination of his contract the worker is sent back to his own country, having been denied, during his sojourn among us, the rights to secure property, to live a family life, or to seek citizenship.

In 1959, 447,535 Mexicans, 6,892 Canadians, 8,671 British West Indians, 56 French West Indians, 99 British Guianans, 607 Japanese, and 227 Spaniards were brought into the United States under these conditions. These, combined with workers held over from the previous year, bring to over half a million the number of aliens admitted to the United States to compete with American workers and denied the benefits which we in this "land of opportunity" have traditionally held out to strangers coming to us from abroad.

Public Law 78

Federal legislation regulating the importation of foreign workers was passed during World War II, in a period of acute labor shortage, and later extended for agriculture because a powerful minority was interested. That minority was made up of those who stood to profit from the use of foreign workers under controls and conditions which in practice make virtual slaves of the workers.

Extensions of Public Law 78, which governs the use of Mexican nationals (by far the largest of all foreign labor programs) on United States farms,

were easily passed in 1954, 1956, and 1958.

In 1960 an aroused citizenry—represented by such organizations as the National Sharecroppers Fund, the National Advisory Committee on Farm Labor, the National Committee to Stabilize Migrant Labor, and the Bishops' Committee for Migrant Workers; influenced by the recommendations of a special consultants' committee appointed by Secretary of Labor Mitchell to study the Mexican labor program—fought extension of Public Law 78 vigorously. They asked either a suspension of the program or at least a revision of the program with adequate safeguards to prevent unfair competition with domestic workers.

They were unable to kill or revise the program, but managed to limit extension to only six months, "with a promise" (as *St. Joseph Magazine* put it) "that the whole smelly business would get an airing later." The law will now expire December 31, 1961.

No Free Labor Market

They were opposed by the Farm Bureau and by many large corporation farmers, whose views seem to imply that a free labor market will not work in agriculture.

As one large corporation farmer once put it, when he feared that some of his Texas-Mexican workers would abandon the harvest to seek higher paying jobs in a nearby city, "The government did right by us during the war, when they gave us German and Italian prisoners and furnished us troops with rifles to keep those fellows working. We had them while we wanted them, and the government fed and housed them when we couldn't use them. That was the program that made sense, and we'll have to get back to it some way."

Surely this is a startling statement, the full implications of which even the speaker would probably have repudiated once the pressure of harvest had passed. Nevertheless, it illustrates the type of thinking which ignores that decent wages and good working conditions are a means of insuring a steady, reliable work force for the farmer.

It is shocking to realize that in the "land of the free" the law permits—even fosters—programs which are lit-

Justice Still Migrat

PRINCIPAL MIGRATORY



tle better than outright slavery for alien farm workers and which offer little or no protection for the American citizen migrant farm worker.

A two-pronged legislative attack on the migrant farm worker problem is needed—one on the state and one on the federal level. Unfortunately this attack has been slow in forming because migrant workers have little political power and hence little voice in the legislatures.

We urge **COMMUNITY** readers to help develop the needed legislative attack by working with like-minded people in nation-wide committees and organizations, and by notifying their elected representatives that ways must be found to provide (in the words of the National Conference to Stabilize Migrant Labor report) "regular employment, steady income, and stable family life for migrants and an adequate supply of labor for farmers."

As Solon, the sage of Athens, said:

Justice will not triumph in our land until those who are not the victims of injustice feel as injured by it as those who are.

—John Kearney

John is Executive Director of Friendship House. He was chairman of the committee which planned the National Conference to Stabilize Migrant Labor, sponsored by the Catholic Council on Working Life, one year ago in November, 1959.

One town

IN HOLLAND, MICHIGAN, Monsignor Arthur Le Roux oversees a parish, St. Francis de Sales, that is a center for migrant workers, the "strangers among strangers," in the northwestern section of Michigan's lower peninsula.

Holland, Michigan, is predominantly composed of Dutch-Reform citizen farmers for whom the Spanish-speaking—Americans and Mexican nationals—work during the summer harvest. This harvest is composed mainly of pickles, used by the H. J. Heinz Company in their canning industry.

At the outset, the company does not present the main problem here, but rather the Dutch Reform farmers, who have caused a priest to be ejected from the farmer's property. This bitterness stems, not from the employment of the migrant worker, but philosophical dif-

In addition to her active work with YCW, Judy attends college in Chicago. She is a member of the Chicago YCW committee on interracial issues.

(Continued from page 1)

Father Smith had been invited to participate in these demonstrations the previous evening, which he did.

It is at this point that I enter. In the conversation with Father Smith, I first became acquainted with CORE, its organization and work. Being interested in the organization and fascinated by the courage of Father Smith, I affirmed an interest in observing the demonstrations. Father Smith persuaded me to participate in the demonstration rather than just observe. Accordingly I accompanied him to the scene of the activity that night. When we arrived, the demonstration had been in force since 4:00 P.M. and was scheduled to end at 7:00.

We joined the group of demonstrators—no more than 15 in all. Most of them were colored, with a sprinkling of whites. Representation was about equally distributed between the sexes.

Resemble Queue

In front of the place, on the sidewalk, several picketers were carrying signs. The remainder of the group was peacefully assembled in front of the locked doors of the restaurant. Some were chatting quietly together; others looked wistfully through the glass doors at individuals more fortunate than themselves.

In appearance the demonstrators resembled a queue, with this added condition, that the queue ever remained stationary. As customers entered and left the establishment, the most violent action of the group never exceeded a reproachful gaze.

The doors were attended by employed personnel, who unbolted them as people arrived, and just as quickly bolted them as soon as they had departed. A note of drama was injected into the situation by the fact that the wife of the proprietor did much of the custodial tending of the doors. She was a woman of about 40, who publicly proclaimed her Catholicism by wearing a medal exposed to open view.

Neither entering nor departing customers were approached in any way, and no disturbance of any type interfered with the passing clientele.

New Arrival

The climax of the demonstration took place just prior to 7:00 o'clock. A priest drove up and approached the group with something more than a hesitant air.

This is where the demonstration takes on a personal aspect. I moved to meet the priest, as any priest would do under similar circumstances, intending to explain what was going on and what our presence meant.

We exchanged names and engaged in a bit of conversation. Immediately the whole tone of things began to change. Hardly aware of what was happening I dimly began to see that we had encountered hostility, premeditated hostility.

Pointed Questions

"Does your superior know that you are taking part in this thing?" (I was much too green and too newly recruited to answer that question satisfactorily. I was hardly orientated in what I was taking part in myself. How could the superior approve when neither he nor I were seasoned and knowledgeable in these matters? It struck me that this was all very ridiculous . . . but it was really no laughing matter.)

"What is this organization? Who runs it?" These were pointed questions, and they secured the initiative for Father Jones (the priest who had just arrived).

When it was explained to him that the technique was that employed by Gandhi, Father Jones showed stunned amazement that Catholic priests could consider themselves Gandhi disciples. Father Smith explained that Gandhi

had been inspired by Christ, and some where in the conversation I explained to him that it didn't matter as much what men thought of our activities as what Christ thought of them.

One Last Try

The conversation was now assuming proportions of hopelessness. Father Smith was obviously disgusted with his fellow priest and pointedly turned his back on Father Jones. Father Jones turned to enter the restaurant. I made one last attempt to dissuade him:

"Father, you aren't going to enter, are you?"

"Indeed I am," he answered, braced himself, and marched into the restaurant where he was greeted with enthusiasm by the management.

The demonstration was ended a few minutes later.

Here may be the time to reflect a bit on what happened. As we pieced events and conversation together, we could see a pattern emerging. Father Jones was obviously a friend of the proprietor (a Mr. Brown). He had been summoned when Father Smith and I had put in an appearance. There is no doubt that he was put out by the fact that two Catholic priests would take part in a public demonstration against discrimination, especially when such demonstration was against his discriminating friend, which certainly made it no discrimination at all. There was no doubt about whose side he was on.

Questions Occur

There was also the uneasy suspicion on my part that the upshot of this whole affair was going to be embarrassing for someone, and I entertained a few qualms that it was going to be embarrassing for me. The effort to persuade the priest not to enter now appeared as a terrible mistake. It was as if we had divulged our whole strategy to the enemy, and he was now pre-



paring to capitalize on our miscalculation.

But how were we to know that this priest had not just entered the arena innocently? What could have been a more warranted assumption than that this priest would be interested in the project, that he would have sympathy for those being discriminated against, that he would certainly be neutral if not favorable to the cause? Naturally one feared that a certain amount of perplexity or even disapproval could accompany a meeting under such circumstances. But one could hardly have anticipated an attitude that severely strictured the group and condemned the priests without sufficient information about either.

It is certainly no exaggeration to say that it would have taken a whole eve-

Picket Sees Moral Issue

The bishops had included directions for determining the precise nature of prudent conduct in these problems.

ning to penetrate the wall of animosity that presented itself in the guise of righteous indignation on the part of Father Jones. And it would have taken a lifetime, if not eternity, to dispel that absolute incredibility that so severely shook Father Jones when he learned that a Catholic priest had borrowed from Gandhi.

Map Plans

As soon as the demonstration was ended, the group retired to the home of one of the members to lay out their strategy for the next day.

It was agreed that the demonstration would be put in force again the following day at 2:00 P.M. and would continue until 5:00. Someone arose to command the presence of the two priests at the demonstration based on the premise that it lent dignity and prestige to such efforts. A question was also raised whether such activities, especially after the appearance of Father Jones, would, or perhaps could, injure the status of the two clergymen. (Here I think there was a genuine concern for any embarrassment which might inconvenience us as sympathetic demonstrators.) I assured them that I had no status to lose, which seemed to be the proper thing to say at the time, but I later questioned the propriety of that statement when I had time to reflect later on.

The meeting ended with the agreement that each member would attempt to enlist the help of five other cars for the next day. The purpose of this was to fill the parking lot in order to make it impossible, or at least difficult, for customers to find parking space. A stipulation was also added that such enlistees should be of a pacific nature in order not to jeopardize the whole movement.

Chilling Examples

After one short stop to recruit a car among Father Smith's friends, we drove home. Father Smith left immediately for further recruiting, and I went upstairs and told all that had happened to Father Thomas, an assistant in the parish.

Jokingly I asked him if he was ready to join us. Father Thomas was obviously not interested.

His philosophy revealed that he was being faithful to the advice and counsel of older priests, who, he said, had repeatedly warned him never, under any circumstances, to engage in such ventures. He knew some chilling examples of priests who had rashly dared to embark on uncertain projects, but had concluded their misfortunes in unending stays of perpetual banishment to unknown and unwanted country parishes, where there was ample opportunity to reflect on imprudence, misdeeds, and episcopal wrath.

He also noted that such endeavors never turn out as planned. Circumstances and unforeseen contingents

tend to snowball, to carry the unfortunate adventurer into ever deeper waters. In the end the individual is left at the mercy of events, and discipline, disfavor, and punitive measures follow as a matter of course.

This was not, to be sure, the most comforting philosophy. It is an understatement to say that I was left a trifle uneasy.

Bishops' Statement

In this frame of mind I went to bed. Sleep did not come easily. I felt I needed some justification, some solid ground, upon which I might build an adequate explanation and apology for my conduct if such a need were to arise.

I got out of bed and located a copy of the Bishops' statement of November, 1958, "Discrimination and the Christian Conscience."

I think that the question which most disturbed me was the question of prudence. And this question in the concrete could be reduced to whether a priest should take part in a public demonstration against discrimination. In other words, just what would the authorities think? There was also somewhat of a problem about CORE. "What is CORE," Father Jones had asked, and one knew that the authorities might well frame the same question.

Call to Action

As an answer to these questions the bishop's statement seemed not unlike a message sent from heaven.

"Discrimination and the Christian Conscience" was a clarion call to action against all forms of segregation and discrimination. It was a call directed not only to Catholics but to all men of good will of whatsoever faith, race, or creed. This seemed plainly to imply that these men of good will should cooperate in a common arena. Cooperation in the activities of CORE was certainly beyond reproach.

Inside the arena of good will no other distinction was made. The clergy were included as well as the laity, and no preference was given to the work of either.

More than that, there seemed to be a distinctive appeal to the clergy. The bishops had referred back to their statement of 1943, in which the episcopate had said that "history imposes upon us a special obligation of justice to see that they (the Negroes) have in fact the rights which are given them in our Constitution." I reasoned that, if there was a special obligation for Catholics, even more so there was a special obligation for the clergy.

Involves Risk

But what about the question of prudence? There was an answer on that, too, in the statement, and that answer

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was framed in the word **courage**. "All must act quietly, courageously, and prayerfully before it is too late." The bishops were openly acknowledging that changes in the existing situation involved some risk. Without some risk the virtue of courage could never be present.

This risk was certainly present in this CORE undertaking. There was the risk of unpopularity, misunderstanding, defamation, and just plain miscalculation. But more real, more threatening, and more fearful was the threat of arrest.

The episcopal statement went on to add, "It is vital that we act now and act decisively." To act decisively in this problem certainly meant that all tried means, short of any violence or deliberate injury to another's rights, were in order. CORE had exhausted more pacific and gentle means in its struggle to lift the color bar at the restaurant. It had then resorted to direct non-violent action.

The bishops had included directions for determining the precise nature of prudent conduct in these problems. They expressly asserted that prudence could never be used as a pretext for inaction. They asked only that promoters of desegregation assure themselves that they are acting on these problems with sincere and earnest intention.

Effective Action

As for rashness, the episcopal guidance noted that experienced and considered judgment of skilled counselors, who had achieved success in these areas, should be sought. Such considered action could not then be stigmatized with the brand of rashness.

I felt the record of CORE satisfied this criterion. Its activities had been effective; they had not left rancor and bitterness in their wake. CORE had demonstrated that it preferred action to exhortation, results to publicity. It had operated quietly and even prayerfully.

There was also a consoling quotation from Pius XII: "The Church has always been energetically opposed to . . . practices arising from what is called the color bar."

If there had ever been any question or doubt about the fact of discrimination actually existing, it was quickly dissipated by the bishops. Any distinction among our fellow men, when based on the accidental fact of race or color, was classed as discrimination.

Now the syllogisms began to multiply. Making accidental differences a basis for distinction in service was discrimination. The restaurant was making accidental differences the basis of distinction among their clientele. Ergo, the restaurant was obviously discriminating.

"By and of Itself"

Again the statement noted that "it is unreasonable and injurious to the rights of others when a factor such as race, by and of itself, should be made a cause of discrimination and a basis for unequal treatment in our mutual relations." The restaurant was obviously making race, by and of itself, a basis for unequal treatment. Ergo, beyond a doubt, this was discrimination, and the restaurant was guilty of it.

Verify Bishops

The teaching of Christ, the nature of the Christian faith, the Constitution, all were called upon to verify the declarations of the bishops. Only an obtuse intellect could claim that any such action as we had taken against the color bar was not in harmony with the principles of Christianity, democracy, and morality, and could reasonably believe that such action was rash.

The action of Father Jones now seemed to assume major proportions. By his conduct he had declared himself in favor of the discrimination policy of the proprietor. He had set himself against the manifest declarations of the pope and the hierarchy. He had injured the prestige and teaching of the Catholic Church. He had compromised the effectiveness of the peaceful demonstration against discrimination and had strengthened the restaurant owner in his resistance measure.

Another Side

With these thoughts I went to sleep. But early the next morning I had good reason to reflect once again on my nocturnal conclusions. Father Thomas promptly informed me that Father Jones had telephoned the pastor, Father Williams, the previous night. He condemned the conduct of Father Smith and myself, and informed Father Williams that he had taken steps to inform the proper authorities about our actions. My superior was going to be notified by mail on Monday about the nefarious activities in which one of his priests was engaging. (I derived not little comfort from the fact that my superior was abroad and quite safely beyond communication with Father Jones.)

Now I began to see a side of this whole issue which had quite escaped me before, namely, the retaliatory powers of the entrenched interests.

It struck me as a kind of bitter irony that the very person who was acting against the mandates of the authorities could appeal to the same authorities for a condemnation of those who were trying to carry out these mandates. Somehow, it seemed to me, the shoes were on the wrong feet.

Father Smith and I should really have been the ones appealing to the bishop — Father Jones' bishop. We should have been denouncing Father

Jones' open contravention of his bishop's manifesto. It should have been Father Jones who had the burden of defending his approval of discrimination. It should have been his conduct that was called into question.

Rare or Well Done

Yet I could not escape the conviction that the authorities would show no distress over the actions of Father Jones, that they would listen readily enough to his complaint, and would feel, as he did, that an explanation of our conduct was in order.

Nevertheless, the actions of Father Jones, especially the threat to tattle to my superior, confirmed me in my determination to participate further in the demonstrations. Since my goose was already being cooked, I could not see that it made too much difference whether it was served rare or well done. I felt that I could just as easily explain a full-hearted, deliberate participation, aware of all its consequences, as I could a token participation in a state of semi-ignorance.

This is the way matters stood when Father Smith and I returned to the scene of our crimes at 2:00 P.M., Sunday afternoon. Father Smith had done a yeomen job of recruiting since the previous night. I was amazed at the personnel that he had gathered on such short notice. Some of our finest parishioners were waiting at the door of the rectory to accompany us to the restaurant. It was consoling to ride out to the scene of action with a parishioner, Jean Baptiste, who assured me that if I were willing to take the risk of demonstrating in his behalf, how much more should he be.

It had occurred to him that we might possibly be arrested, and he thought that the \$30.00 he carried in his pocket would suffice for the fine. It calmed me somewhat to know that someone else felt that an arrest was a possibility. That no arrest was forthcoming, and that perhaps such a risk was never impending, does not detract from the fact that such a future was a potent reality in our minds.

Block Parking

Once arrived at the restaurant, we saw that the demonstration was going to be out of all proportions to that of the day before. A good crowd had already preceded us, and the number of participants increased by the minute. In a short time the whole parking lot was jammed with cars. The lines in front of the door branched out on both sides of the front door; then double lines were formed.

In short order, swarms of policemen began to arrive. Not all of them entered the parking lot, but each squad car stopped long enough to survey the scene for possible signs of disturbance. At least three squad cars entered the parking area. Whether the police could not find parking space, or whether they felt that they were not obligated by the signs and markings which delineated traffic lanes and parking space, I do not know. What I do know is that they effectively ended any possibility of business for the establishment for the next several hours by jamming up the entrances and lanes with their cars. If any customers thought of entering the place, they were discouraged by the long line of demonstrators, by the lack of the parking space, and by the unconventional parking habits of the police.

From 2:00 to 5:00 P.M., whatever the restaurant operated on, it is quite certain that it wasn't profit.

Creditable Job

It was a long three hours. The weather was exceedingly warm, and I felt rivulets of perspiration rolling down my back. For the first hour and a half Jean Baptiste, responding to my desire for conversation, related to me the history of his life.

His parents originally hailed from Louisiana but now lived in Texas. His

father and mother had no education whatsoever, and his mother could not speak English to the present day. They had raised up a large family on the edge of extreme poverty.

If I could judge by the quality of Jean, they had done more than a creditable job.

After a while the conversation slowed. And the passing of time did likewise. A reporter from Radio Station XXX put in an appearance and made his way into the establishment. Shortly he returned outside and looked for a spokesman among the demonstrators.

He was directed to John Roberts, a personable young Negro, who was willing and able to oblige him. Then the reporter put his apparatus in order (he was carrying a portable tape recorder), described the scene talking into the mike, and proceeded to ask questions of John Roberts. John explained the purpose of CORE, the previous encounters and negotiations with Mr. Brown, the proprietor, and something of the nature of the present demonstration.

Possible Questions

All of this took place about six feet from my station in the line. As the minutes ticked by, I grew more and more uncomfortable. I feared that the reporter would want to interview some of the participants, and I was much afraid that I would be a likely target.

I began to anticipate possible questions. "What is your name?" Should I answer boldly and clearly? Or should I seek to hide my identity from public scrutiny by taking refuge in an answer of "No comment"?

If anyone had been watching me closely at the time, he would have seen me shifting from foot to foot, betraying the anxiety and uncertainty that I felt. When I finally determined that the "no comment" answer filled the part of discretion, I felt easier.

However, my fears proved to be groundless when the reporter showed no intention of interviewing anyone but John. Still, I breathed easier only when the tape recorder was safely tucked away, and the reporter had left the premises.

No More Participation

At 5:00 the demonstration broke up. It had been an uncomfortable three hours for me. And more than once I had asked myself the question why had I not gone off on a nice safe picnic, or why was I not now enjoying a cooling, refreshing swim in the pool at the seminary.

The anxious possibilities of arrest which had plagued me most of the afternoon now moved me to approach John to tell him that I did not think that I would take part in any more public demonstrations. I offered the excuse that I was leaving on vacation the same night or the next day, although I had originally intended to depart on Wednesday. However, I assured him that CORE enjoyed my support and I would be willing to take part in future actions in other capacities. He asked me if they had my address, and when I answered in the affirmative, we shook hands, and I departed.

A Phone Call

I could not escape breathing a sigh of relief as we slowly drove away. I did not then anticipate that my role would carry over into the next act.

At home I encountered a somewhat excited Father Williams, who had just been in a telephone fray with Mr. Brown, the Catholic proprietor of the restaurant. In the course of a protracted and not-too-amiable conversation, Mr. Brown had relieved himself of a few convictions of his own:

(1) John Roberts was a notorious character wanted in two states for

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"Kneel-Ins"

NEW ORLEANS, Louisiana — "Six or seven" white churches of major denominations have been successfully integrated here, according to Negroes who have been participating in "kneel-ins." Similar attempts will be made at other churches.

The Negroes were accompanied to the churches by white persons.

"We were planning to leave if the ushers had asked us to," one of them said. "We want to find out which churches are ready and willing to establish fellowship with all individuals, regardless of race."

He added that the Negroes were treated "very warmly" by the majority of the churches.

"Swim-Ins"

CHARLOTTE, North Carolina — A previously all-white public swimming pool here admitted three Negro girls. It marked the first such integration in North Carolina.

The city-owned Revolution Park pool admitted the girls, who swam for about 45 minutes at one end of the pool, some distance from a number of white swimmers. No incidents were reported.

Approve Sit-Ins

LOUISVILLE, Kentucky — The recent sit-in demonstrations received the enthusiastic approval of the National Federation of Catholic College Students at their annual meeting here. At the final business session of the week-long conference students adopted the stand by a voice vote, only a scattered chorus of "nays" being heard against the resolution.

The Federation also went on record in support of the "basic aims" of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and congratulated the Association on its successes in the fields of racial relations and human rights.

The resolution endorsing sit-in demonstrations also said that suspension or expulsion of a student from school "as a result of his free and responsible expression of opinion . . . is a flagrant violation of academic freedom."

About 450 students from 160 Catholic colleges throughout the nation attended the conference.

Lay Missions

NEW YORK, New York — Africa's emergence as a major factor in current world affairs is signalized in the selection of a keynote speaker for the Second National Lay Mission Conference, to be held in New York at Manhattan College on November 25-26. The two-day conference will be sponsored by the college and the Committee for the International Lay Apostolate.

The Committee named James T. Harris, Jr., assistant executive director of the American Society of African Culture, as keynote speaker for the 1960 conference. Theme of the conference will be "New Horizons in the World Mission of the Church."

Committee for the International Lay Apostolate is comprised of the following Catholic organizations interested in the lay missionary movement: the Association for International Development, the Grail Institute for Overseas Service, International Catholic Auxiliaries, Young Christian Workers, and the Women Volunteers Association.

—Jean A. Hess

Miss Hess, a librarian in Louisville, Kentucky, regularly contributes our "News Briefs."

Picket Takes Risks

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check forgery.

(2) CORE was a group of Communists.

(3) Father Smith was a known troublemaker who had been in various escapades which had caused unrest and turmoil before.

(4) On the morrow he was getting in touch with the chancery officials of the archdiocese.

(5) He had a right to conduct his business in any way he saw fit.

(6) He would surely have had the whole group arrested for trespassing on his property, were it not that he was too obligated to his religion to cause arrest of priests. (Judging from the economic interests that governed Mr. Brown throughout, I would be forced to say that his nobility in refusing to arrest priests had its source in the economic consequences which would surely follow.)

(7) Finally, he could not understand why Catholic priests would work against him. He wasn't quite sure how long he could remain a Catholic if such nefarious priestly activity continued.

Try to Placate

Father Williams was somewhat flustered and embarrassed by the whole conversation. Naturally there was no way for him to know what was true and what was not of the charges of Mr. Brown. And from the outset it was only too apparent that Father Williams was caught up in a battle which he had not started, had no wish to engage in, was unacquainted with the course of affairs, and was quite innocent of any part which Father Smith or myself had played, since he was not our pastor and could not exercise any real authority over our actions.

To the credit of Father Williams it should be noted that he tried in vain to placate Mr. Brown, that he urged him to negotiate with CORE and to talk directly with Father Smith or myself.

Father Williams was relieved when I assured him I did not intend to participate in any more demonstrations.

Proprietors' Role

Up until this episode I had entertained a good deal of sympathy for Mr. Brown. I could understand why he might ask:

"Why me? Why should I have to open my doors to colored clientele and ruin my business, when there are others who operate on the same principle?" I could easily associate myself with these sentiments of Mr. Brown because he was on the carpet alone, when he was far from being the lone discriminatory operator of an eating establishment.

At the same time I thought he should be able to see that such an attitude had no real foundation. All he had to do was open his doors, his present distress, inconvenience, and vexation would immediately diminish if not vanish, and CORE would quietly move on to the next target.

Dirty Tactics

But more positively against him, it could be urged that his tactics had been somewhat dirty from the beginning. He had caused the arrest of a city official; he had been hopelessly adamant in negotiation; and now he was employing a back-handed pressure on Father Smith and myself by embarrassing the pastor with idle threats, insincere promises and persuasions. There was also a tissue of unconfirmed charges which ranged from outright lying to the blackest of slanders.

Against such tactics I could not help but grow calloused. Even vengeful thoughts and counter tactics of like kind crossed my mind. But I kept harkening back to the precepts of

CORE, which did not countenance anything of the kind.

During the evening meal we listened intently to the news broadcast over Station XXX, which faithfully reproduced the events of the afternoon. The public coverage of the demonstration lent it an aura of magnitude and importance out of proportion to its true significance. But there could be no doubt that the cautionary counsels of Father Thomas had a certain ring of truth.

How could one have foreseen only 24 hours before that participation in a popular demonstration against discrimination would attract the attention of numerous policemen, command the coverage of a news broadcast, and incur the furious, vengeful efforts of Mr. Brown?

Life Goes On

With the broadcast the climax of this little drama had been reached. The history of the event marched on, but I was no longer a part of it. In very short order Mr. Brown obtained a court injunction forbidding any further popular demonstrations on his property. Middletown resumed its life little better or worse for the incident.

But for one person, at least, life could never again be quite the same. I came away from this experience solidly confirmed in an opinion that has been growing in my mind ever since, namely, that such changes as are wrought in the social order do not just happen. Without the constant exertion of pressure, things will remain as they were, in a state of inertia.

Vested Interests

Moreover, I perceived the power of resistance of vested interests, of the many imponderables that are alive and working in every pressurized change.

I saw the bishop's statement take on a vital and crucial importance when it was related to direct action, an importance it could never have assumed under placid reading conditions or even within a preaching or exhortative situation.

Needless to say I was grateful that the current of events had not swept me into waters over my head. At the same time I was more than a wee bit gleeful that I had been able to strike a blow for freedom, equality, and desegregation.

Apology Not Needed

What about the fears of ecclesiastical disapproval? It is a pleasure to add that they were in vain. My extensive apology was never needed. Yet two important things must be added. No authoritative disapproval does not mean approval. Whether the clergy should take part in popular demonstrations remains an open question, for it is one thing to justify such participation in fact, it is something else in principle.



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There is always the possibility that activity in behalf of desegregation, undertaken in the name of the bishops and in response to their instructions, may result in a repudiation of such activity by the bishops themselves as a misinterpretation of their meaning.

Living, Influential

But in such an eventuality there would always be the consolation that "Discrimination and the Christian Conscience" is a living, influential document, one that is being interpreted by trial and error rather than by idle discussion. There would remain the assurance that good will is at work even when some divergence from proper prudence makes an appearance. One could hardly wish or expect more happy anniversaries for the bishop's infant document which this month of November, 1960, celebrates its second birthday.

—Rev. Alexander Luetkemeyer,
O.S.B.

Father Luetkemeyer teaches at Conception Abbey, Missouri. This is his first article in COMMUNITY.

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